



Empowering Leadership: Computing Scholars of Tomorrow Alliance (ELA)

empoweringleadership.org

The EL Alliance has been critical to my development as an academic professional....In April 2007 I was a 2nd year Ph.D. student. I was one of only four African American students of 650 graduate students in the school of Engineering, and the only one in my department...Because there are so few of us underrepresented students at the PhD level, we often find it challenging to break into established networks of student support...The EL Alliance has provided a necessary vehicle for me to become a member of a community of scholars.

Christopher Harris, Graduate Student, the University of California, Irvine

The ELA Mission

The Empowering Leadership Alliance: Computing Scholars of Tomorrow Alliance is a national network of committed university and industry professionals that addresses the needs of underrepresented minority students at research universities across the country. The ELA is committed to ensuring that the nation's research universities do their part in contributing to the preparation of the nation's next generation of computing professionals and prepare them for positions of leadership at the national level.

The ELA Challenge: Loss of the Precious Few

The nation is losing many of its best students from computing and other science, engineering, technology, and mathematics disciplines when students enter universities intending to major in those areas then migrate to other disciplines, primarily for inequitable academic preparation which causes a loss of confidence and an I-don't-belong reaction.

Sample ELA Accomplishments

- The ELA has engaged a network numbering over 650 members to date.
- The ELA inspired the creation of the Minority Computer Science Student Organization, UTCS ELA, at the University of Texas at Austin. Members meet monthly for community support, mentoring on research, and social activities. At Rice University, the new CAMPUS program (Community and Mentoring Program for Undergraduate Students) connects students and faculty in an innovative advising relationship.
- The ELA catalyzed the New England Computer Science Department Chairs organization, which successfully launched the first annual New England Undergraduate Computing Symposium (NEUCS).
- Through the national model, an additional one hundred students have been mentored, more than 500 have participated in ELA conference networking activities, and dozens have organized panels, given talks, and presented posters at conferences; provided tutoring, and much more.

The ELA Work

The ELA provides resources and opportunities that support students at research universities to remain and flourish in the discipline.

How We Work

The ELA has developed three working models depending on the size of the university minority community.

1. **Local Model** – Where sufficient critical mass of underrepresented students exists at a university, a local support network encourages students. Local ELA programs provide in-person relationships with on-campus faculty and peers. The local model is used at Rice University, UC Berkeley, and UT Austin.
2. **Regional Model** – Where critical mass is not available locally, a network is built through groups of universities within a region. Regional programs provide an opportunity for collaborations that can have a strong impact on several institutions, where individuals can meet and focus on multi-campus programs that give students and faculty the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. A regional model is being developed and tested in the Boston area.
3. **National Model** – Seeking out and supporting individuals across the country through virtual and in-person experiences, a national network allows any individual student, faculty member, or computing professional across the country to become connected to others as a part of the ELA, including those that are not a member of any partnering institution. The national model is particularly important to isolated minority students.

Who is the ELA?

Richard Tapia, University Professor, Rice University, is the Principal Investigator and Program Director. The ELA Leadership Team collaborates with him to guide the program and conduct the program activities.

Partnering Lead Institutions

Rice University, Boston University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Georgia, Clemson University, Tufts University and Stony Brook University are the Alliance lead institutions. Supporting partners include MentorNet, the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA), and the New England Computer Science Chairs (NECSC), an organization that was started as a result of ELA work in the Boston area. Third party evaluation is done by Lecia Barker of the University of Texas, Austin.

And YOU!!!

Hundreds of students, faculty, and industrial professionals from all across the country have joined the ELA.

Join the EL Alliance!

To learn more or to join the Empowering Leadership Alliance, go to

<http://www.empoweringleadership.org>

In just one year of belonging to the EL Alliance and serving on its Student Advisory Board, I have had many opportunities to meet leaders from across the United States who inspire me to continue my studies and get involved with programs where I can help other students. ...It has been very important to me to have the network of support offered through the EL Alliance, and to have a program that encourages me to explore opportunities for research and leadership. ...I am the first in my family to go to college. Becoming part of the EL Alliance has helped me consider several options for my career, and has provided an environment that encourages me in a very meaningful way.

Jessica Rivas, Texas A & M Undergraduate



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